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Note verbale dated 26 May 1999 from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to request the admission of the Republic of Korea to membership in the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The Republic of Korea attaches great importance to the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for the protection of refugees and the promotion of their rights. As a State party to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, the Republic of Korea has been fully committed to the letter and spirit of the aforementioned international instruments.

In recent years, the Republic of Korea has substantially increased its contributions to the Programme of the High Commissioner. Its annual contribution to the General Programme alone has increased from US$ 100,000 in 1994 to $1,500,000 in 1997. Despite the Republic of Korea's financial difficulties since 1997, it contributed $1,000,000 in 1998 and will continue to make contributions commensurate with its capabilities.

Furthermore, the Government of the Republic of Korea, during its presidency of the Security Council in May 1997, initiated an open debate on the issue of "Protection for Humanitarian Assistance to Refugees and Others in Conflict" and contributed to the adoption of two presidential statements of the Security Council relating to the issue.

In the light of its genuine concern for refugee issues and its continuing contributions to the work of UNHCR, the Government of the Republic of Korea is convinced that its admission to membership in the Executive Committee of the Programme of the High Commissioner will contribute to further strengthening the common endeavours of the international community in resolving refugee problems.

* E/1999/100 and Add.1.

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The Government of the Republic of Korea would therefore appreciate it if the Secretary-General would transmit the present application to the Economic and Social Council for its consideration.